

# SFEI Kindergarten Program

A. Ellison

# Background

- SFEI opened in 1990
  - JSC employee population has grown between 1990-2006
    - ISS operational in 1998
    - Sustaining Engineering contract awarded ~1996
    - IPIC contract awarded ~1999
    - CEV contract pending Fall 2006

# SFEI Kindergarten

- Kindergarten opened in 1998
  - Past Investment to bring kindergarten to SFEI
    - Time
    - effort
    - cost
    - Safety and quality
    - Intended as investment to provide benefit of a Kindergarten program to both current and future members

# Exceptional Quality of Education

- Results from families of graduates
  - Exceptional head start on the public and private school system
    - Some former students reported to begin elementary school performing at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading levels
    - Multiple parents credit the SFEI kindergarten for having given their children the best head start possible
    - SFEI Kindergarten is a model others only wish they had access to

# Driving Requirements

- Higher demand at infant/toddler level
  - Current wait list is approximately 143 children below 2
- Lower demand at Kindergarten level
  - More options for parents at those ages
    - Counterpoints:
      - Openings are not widely circulated to offsite contractors at all, or early enough
      - Parents are not required to commit to a decision in time to allow SFEI to plan
      - Employees who are grandparents are currently excluded from enrolling their grandchildren

# Openings created by Cancellation of Kindergarten

- Cancellation of Kindergarten program for 2007
  - Displaces 8 confirmed and TBD unconfirmed families
  - Opens 12 Older infant/toddler (NOT INFANT) spaces
  - Reduces wait list from 143 to 131

# Informal Poll Results

- Results reported at July board meeting
  - 2007 Kindergarten year
    - 8 respondents plan to attend SFEI kindergarten
    - 8 do not plan on using SFEI kindergarten
    - Remaining undecided
    - Did not factor in new families who have just begun at SFEI

# Negative Impacts

- Many parents entering SFEI late did so with the intention of enrolling in the kindergarten
  - Cancellation within 1 year is very little warning
  - Many feel the long wait for such a short enrollment period is unfair after such a long wait on the list
  - Several have made longer term plans/commitments that relied on SFEI providing a kindergarten
  - New families with children starting this fall have been completely surprised by potential for cancellation with so short a notice
- TBD cost to reconfigure rooms in 2006 for no kindergarten option
  - Disruption to staff and classrooms caused by reassignment of teachers/room reconfigurations
  - Trickle down effect to children
- Small reduction in the wait list is not great enough to sacrifice a high performing kindergarten program
  - Need larger reduction in the very young infant wait list if you are to serve the larger membership demand
  - Demand is in line with public sector higher demands for childcare at infant level

# Near Term Solutions

- Require firm kindergarten enrollment commitments from SFEI families NLT than 1 year in advance
  - If short, outreach to contractor families to secure reservations
  - Honor system if withdraw, must find a replacement student
- Establish focus group (vested interest parents) to work on obtaining firm commitments for remaining spaces
- Consider opening kindergarten to grandchildren of NASA employees
- Involve the offsite contractors HR programs to obtain full distribution of notice of openings

# Bigger Picture

- SFEI is governed by an elected Board
  - board members typically leave after their children leave SFEI for public school
- There is no omnipresent long term “steering committee”
  - Needed to study trends since inception (1990)
    - Demand at infant level is higher than older ages everywhere
    - Requires long term plans to meet this that surpass the average family’s enrollment period at SFEI
    - Never any funding for expansion, need creative solutions
- SFEI risks re-inventing the wheel every 2-6 years without long term studies

# Long Term Solutions

- Problem only officially studied for 3 months with limited participation
- The long term problem is higher demand for openings at younger infant age
  - This has been consistent over history of center and in the local public sector over the last 10 years
- Sacrificing the past investment to provide a Kindergarten program at the center is short sighted
  - This plan does not provide 143 openings for two year olds and below, it provides 12 older infants/toddlers at the expense of 8 plus kindergarten students and TBD future children
  - Room migration plan with the addition of an older infant room could still bottleneck at later rooms in some high use years
- **Band-Aid, not a solution**
- **Recommend a steering committee to investigate long term growth, demands, proposed options for resolution.**

# Support/Contributors

- Constance Adams
- Karen and Terry Canada
- Tracey Costello
- Jennifer Crucian
- Amy Ellison
- Todd and Shannon Gaspard
- Ed Gonzalez
- Crystal Haddock
- Laura Hood
- Julie Jackson and Daniel Raab
- Jeremy Jacobs
- Phong Le
- Jill Linn
- Linda Loerch
- Catherine Marrs
- Jennifer Mason and Sean Power
- Tom and Ann Marshburn
- Carmina and Phillip Mortillaro
- Pam and Tim Straube
- Lisa Swanson
- Candy Martin

# Appendix A

## Letters of Support

Amy,

I am writing in strong support of the SFEI Kindergarden program at the NASA-JSC Child Care Center.

Our son, Nicholas attended SFEI Kindergarden in 2000 when the program was relatively new (I think the program started in 1999). My husband and I were happy with the program at the time, and looking back we realize how lucky we were and still think it gave Nicholas an advantage in the public elementary school. Our only regret is that we were out of the country the last couple of years, and that our younger son, Matthew (currently beginning first grade), was not able to attend Kindergarden with Mrs. Ramsey and Mrs. Jody.

For Nicholas and many other children, easing into grade-school from pre-K in the same building meant that the focus was on the learning, not the adjustment to new surroundings and different people. Completing Kindergarden at the JSC facility gave Nicholas a solid foundation, enabling him to start first grade in a public school, not as the youngest new comer to a building full of "bigger kids", but as a confident first-grader. His confidence came from having gone through an entire year preparing for first grade in a place where he was part of the "graduating class," the "big men on campus," if you will.

In my opinion, this advantage is only part of the formula that leads to a successful program. Another ingredient is the strong teaching team that Mrs. Ramsey and Mrs. Jody form. They complement each other, providing guidance and support for all the children and their parents. Mrs. Ramsey used learning-to-read methods and enrichment that truly helped Nicholas learn to read. I even contacted her last year to request that she send me a particular package so that I could use it with Matthew last year while he attended Kindergarden overseas. She did send it to me and it was as successful with Matthew as it has been with Nicholas.

We strongly believe Mrs. Ramsey's methods and philosophy provided Nicholas with the solid foundation on which his current good homework habits are built. Mrs. Ramsey and Mrs. Jody provided age- and level-appropriate learning challenges that kept Nicholas motivated and learning. I don't remember ever seeing any "busy work"--all the work I remember was meaningful and even fun. There were so many fun enrichment activities, I don't think the students realized it was work. Nicholas didn't just learn to read or to count, however, he learned social skills, responsibility, and perseverance--all skills he uses today.

The SFEI Kindergarden onsite also provided an opportunity for us parents to be involved at school. During our lunch hour we helped with reading groups and other activities--it was easy for us to support the class, showing Nicholas that his education was important to us--another proven ingredient to successful students. Another key ingredient to the success of the program is that it's convenient for working parents: the "aftercare" is built right into the Kindergarden day, so the young students don't need to be shuffled from one place to another. This aspect was instrumental in allowing my husband and I to work onsite without disturbing our work day routines. The same goes for the summer programs, before and after Kindergarden. Again, this eases the transition for the kids and allows NASA-JSC workers to do their jobs without distractions or worry.

The SFEI Kindergarden is providing a beneficial and valuable opportunity to NASA-JSC workers with school age children and to discontinue the program would be a dis-service.

Please let me know what we can do to help,  
Carmina and Philip Mortillaro

**From:** Canada, Terry W. (JSC-OC42)[BAR]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 07, 2006 10:23 AM  
**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Subject:** RE: SFEI Kindergarten Program

**From:** Canada, Terry W. (JSC-OC42)[BAR]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 17, 2006 3:04 PM  
**To:** Rodriggs, Liana (JSC-ZV)  
**Subject:** FW: Kindergarten plans

We were **definitely planning** on Katie **attending** Kindergarten at the JSC Childcare Center.

We are **very pleased and satisfied with everything we've encountered** so far at the Center! The facilities, the programs, the activities, the reasonable rates, and **especially the staff** (Miss Sandy & Miss Teresa were absolutely great, and so are Miss Evelyn & especially Miss Lois!), to say nothing of the convenience to my wife and I and our work situations.

We **waited over two and a half years to be accepted** in to this program because we thought/**heard that it was the best**, and we certainly want to see it through (doesn't seem fair to have paid our dues [figuratively AND literally] and not be able to take advantage of what was 'advertised'! We will be very disappointed if Kindergarten is discontinued!!

P.S. - Has there been some 'problem' with the Kindergarten that is going unsaid here, that we are not aware of?

Amy:

I attended the meet the teacher night last night and I have had Alex in the Kindergarten program for 4 days now and I can tell you that I am ABSOLUTELY sure that I've made the right decision in keeping Alex in the JSC K program. Mrs. Ramsay and Mrs. Jody seem like they are going to be a fantastic influence on Alex and he has already come home each day telling me very interesting things he did that day and that he's having a great time. He has a firm foundation in reading from his preschool room at JSC, BUT I believe what the teachers shared with us about what they plan for the year and the interest that he is showing that he will grow both personally and academically under their guidance. This is such a critical time for kids starting school and I can't imagine sending him to public school where he'd be one of 24 students with \*one\* teacher. Throughout the years Alex has been at JSC I've heard the stories about kids leaving that K program reading at beyond the first grade level. Having seen different activities they plan to help these kids get to that level, I believe it is at least that and potentially much higher. And that's just the reading... I believe the math, writing, and other skills they'll start learning in this class are going to be just as excellent. They're teaching the kids estimation with a guessing jar. They're teaching the kids critical thinking. They are creative with their teaching methods and are flexible enough to engage all the different learning styles of the kids in that class. They are excited to be there and Alex has already caught that excitement and wants to be there.

I guess you could put a price on this - it would be called "tuition"! but I think what Alex is going to gain from this is "priceless".

I sincerely hope that the K program is retained at JSC. I know of a few other local private K programs, but I've never heard feedback about them like I heard about the one at JSC.

I sympathize incredibly with those on the wait list. I was there myself for both of my children. Neither started at the JSC until they were nearly one year old. The gain of 10-12 spots for younger children would not, in my opinion, make any appreciable dent in the waiting list. The waiting list really indicates that the JSC CCC is ready to grow in space and additional teachers. Whether that is a new building or a temporary building or whatever... it's an indication for growth, not cutting programs.

Thanks for collecting our thoughts to share with the rest of the Board, Amy!

Tracy Costello

Tracy Jennifer (Thiel) Costello, PhD  
Postdoctoral Fellow

CPB 4.3629      Ph# 713-745-0064      FAX: 713-792-8261  
<tthiel@request.mdacc.tmc.edu>  
Dept of Epidemiology, MD Anderson Cancer Center (MDA Box 1340)  
1155 Hermann Pressler, Houston, Texas 77030

**From:** Tracy Costello [tthiel@request.mdacc.tmc.edu]

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 02, 2006 2:28 PM

**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)

**Subject:** Re: FW: SFEI Kindergarten Program

We are keeping our son in the JSC Kindergarten this year because of the good things we've heard in the past about the program. I'm very very surprised that there isn't as much demand this year, but I wonder if part of it is that the kids that did not opt to stay for the K program have older siblings who are already in school. If the proportion of kids with older sibs was much higher this year, that would explain, at least partly, the discrepancy between this year and years past. This assumes that the program and the perception parents have of the program has not changed.

I would be very disappointed to see SFEI discontinue the Kindergarten program. I think it should remain.

Sincerely,  
Tracy Costello

Room Captains:

Please distribute the below to your rooms..thanks in advance.

Dear Parents:

As you are aware, there is a study underway to assess whether or not continuation of the Kindergarten program at SFEI is in the best interest of the membership. Based on the last board meeting, a decision may be reached as early as September of 2006 that will affect 2007 and beyond school years.

If you support continuation of the kindergarten program at SFEI and feel that it should be maintained for future parents and children, I am interested in hearing your opinions. Based on the earlier informal poll, it would appear that this is a minority dissenting opinion at present.

Please contact me with your thoughts if you support continuation of the Kindergarten program.

Amy Ellison  
EVA Office  
281-483-2353  
amy.l.ellison@nasa.gov

Personal Cell 713-851-0333

Tracy Jennifer (Thiel) Costello, PhD  
Postdoctoral Fellow

**From:** Crucian, Jennifer [jennifer.crucian@christushealth.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 31, 2006 3:10 PM  
**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Subject:** JSC Kindergarten

Hi Amy,

I am a parent of 2 children who have greatly benefited from the teaching of Mrs. Ramsay and Ms. Jodi. For starters, there is not one kindergarten program around that offers the small class size with 2 instructors. Secondly, the confidence that both of my children have received from this wonderful program has sustained them through their educational journey. We followed JSC with the public school system. My eldest has been the highest ARP reader in his grade level for 2 years out of 100 students. I don't think he would have achieved this without the wonderful foundation Mrs. Ramsay laid out for him. My youngest child will be starting 1<sup>st</sup> grade this year, and I have no doubt that he will follow in his brothers' footsteps academically.

In the public school system I have met many children and parents and I am startling aware of how a child can be left behind and how it impacts the rest of the years to follow. Many of my oldest son's friends had to go to Sylvan Learning center and tutors in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to hone up reading skills needed to past the TAKS test. They did not receive the foundation necessary to accomplish this minor goal. Now the kids are facing esteem problems because of this neglect.

I feel it would be a major mistake to remove the kindergarten from the daycare. The children who attend the childcare from the youngest age are already advanced. Having the kindergarten to strengthen the foundation for future academics is priceless to those parents who want to give their child that opportunity. Not to mention, I love Mrs. Ramsay to death, she puts her total heart into these children.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Crucian

**From:** Gaspard, Todd A. (JSC-CC32)  
**Sent:** Monday, August 07, 2006 9:38 AM  
**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Subject:** FW: Kindergarten at SFEI  
[I echo Shannon's words exactly.](#)

Todd

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**From:** Shannon Gaspard [mailto:shannone1@mac.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 07, 2006 8:37 AM  
**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Cc:** Gaspard, Todd A. (JSC-CC32)  
**Subject:** Kindergarten at SFEI

My girls are in room 3 and 5 at the start of this next school year and I would love to continue the kindergarten program at the daycare. It is a wonderful program and all of the children are very familiar with the teachers and it wouldn't be as difficult of a transition for them.

Please let me know what else I can do to help continue this program.

Thank you,  
Shannon Gaspard  
Mother of Sydney and Mia Gaspard

**From:** Gonzalez, Edward P. (JSC-DM)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 08, 2006 4:38 PM  
**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Subject:** FW: SFEI Kindergarten Program  
Amy,

We've been quite please with the education J.P. is getting at SFEI. We're definitely in favor of SFEI keeping the kindergarten program. Thanks!

Ed González  
Group Lead, Orbit Flight Dynamics Group  
(281) 483-1927  
Pager: (281) 868-0389  
[≤mailto:edward.p.gonzalez@nasa.gov>](mailto:edward.p.gonzalez@nasa.gov)

The opinion expressed is my own and not that of NASA.

**From:** Jacobs, Jeremy B. (JSC-ES4)  
**Sent:** Monday, July 31, 2006 5:10 PM  
**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Subject:** FW: SFEI Kindergarten Program  
Amy,

I responded previously... but will again.

At the moment, I do plan to enroll my children in the JSC Daycare. My oldest will be eligible in August 2008.

Thanks!

Jeremy

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**From:** Lin, Jill D. (JSC-MV)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 16, 2006 10:09 PM  
**To:** Saunders, Melanie (JSC-OA); Gafka, Tammy L. (JSC-ES2); Berdich, Debbie (JSC-EB); miranda.scroggins@CENTERPOINTENERGY.COM; Rodriggs, Liana (JSC-ZV)  
**Cc:** Lin, Frank (JSC-MV6); Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Subject:** Kindergarten Advocate

SFEI Board Members:

First, let me offer my apologies for not being able to support tomorrow's Board meeting in person; I'm currently on TDY and simply can't be there. I have been following Amy Ellison's efforts and have spoken with her several times to share my support for the effort to retain the kindergarten class at SFEI. I did, however, want to offer my support first hand, if not in person, at least by email.

We currently have two children enrolled at SFEI (Halle in Room 8 and Kiersten in Room 5). We were fortunate to place Halle in the center when she was 11 months old. As such, we have had several years to enjoy the wonderful care that the center has to offer. Kindergarten has not been a topic that we have thought long and hard about over the past several years - it always seemed so far away! With the current discussions regarding the possibility of dismantling the program, we have been forced to think about such.

I have indicated to Amy Ellison that Halle would be a "definite" kindergarten attendee for the 2007-2008 school year. Our rational for enrolling Halle in the 2007 kindergarten class is primarily based on convenience. With another younger child enrolled at the center, having Halle in kindergarten at SFEI allows us one more year of having both kids in the same place. Secondary to the convenience comes the level of education that the children receive at SFEI. While I have no hard data, I do know of several cases where the children have benefited from their kindergarten experience at SFEI. The cost factor is not something that we consider as a weighting factor as we are considering a private school for our children's education versus the public school system.

I fully understand the financial situation that the center is in today - less than full capacity places a financial burden on the center that eventually gets passed along to the families. I think SFEI needs to take the time to fully study the implications (both good and bad) associated with retaining or dismantling this program before a decision is made.

Thank you for your time.

***Jill D. Lin***

NASA/Orbiter Project Office  
Orbiter Transition Manager  
Phone: 281-483-2460  
Cell Phone: 713-449-3392  
Email/Blackberry: jill.d.lin@nasa.gov

**From:** Le, Phuong N. (JSC-LW)  
**Sent:** Monday, August 07, 2006 9:21 AM  
**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Subject:** Re: Kindergarten program  
Amy,

I've been happy with the school and would like Trinity to continue her Kindergarten program here.  
Thanks.

Phuong

**From:** Loerch, Linda (JSC-SK)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 09, 2006 3:52 PM  
**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Subject:** RE: Support pitch

Amy-

This is a great pitch and thanks for spear-heading this effort. I, too, feel as if the decisions are being made quickly and the proposed solution to low kindergarten enrollment is to omit the program. David only got off of the wait list one year ago, and now his stay at the JSC CCC could be just for 2 years. I think a new infant class will take ~8 infants off of the wait list yearly, but after that, the wait list will change minimally since few children leave the center once enrolled. Children will be removed from the wait list as they get older and the classes can handle more, but I too am not clear how bottlenecks will be avoided. I think this plan will ultimately mean that if you don't get enrolled as an infant, you likely won't as an older child either.

I know the Gloria Dei Early Childhood Ministries, where David went prior to the JSC CCC, had difficulties with their kindergarten enrollment and cancelled their program ~2004. I'm not sure if it has re-opened, but lends to the argument of preserving a capability at JSC since so few private, quality options exist.

I plan to be at the August 17 discussion.

Linda H. Loerch, M.S.  
Manager, Exercise Countermeasures Project  
NASA/JSC/SK2  
281-483-2557 (Office)  
281-483-6041 (Fax)

To whom to may concern,

My son attended kindergarten at JSC in 2002. When he started first grade in public school he was well ahead of his peers in all the basics such as reading and writing. I believe that kindergaten at JSC and his teacher Ms. Ramsey gave him that advantage. I would highly recommend the JSC kindergarten program to any parent within the JSC community. I believe it would be very short sighted to take away this tremendous resource from our children.

Thanks You  
Catherine Marrs

I think it looks pretty good. I just want to emphasize, which I'm sure you will, how cancellation of Kindergarten will *greatly* affect families who have been counting on it for years (like us – we have been depending on SFEI Kindergarten to get us through my hardest year of medical residency). However not getting into the infant/toddler room will likely not have as huge an impact, as those parents are likely already making alternative plans from the get-go. Of course, it could help a few families that already have kids in the center, but that issue has already been addressed with the priority to siblings rule.

I would love to offer to help you on all of this, but I'm afraid that being in medical school and working 70 hour weeks plus studying would just mean that it will never get done! Thanks so much for working on all of this – we really owe you one!

Ann Marshburn (Grace's mom, Room 6)

Amy,

Again, thank you so much for taking this on. I wanted to know if you have a letter of support from us, or if you need something a little more substantial than the emails we've sent you. Tom thinks he will be able to make it to the meeting tomorrow. I, unfortunately, will be in the OR at St. Lukes and will be unable to make it. In fact, it's a perfect example of how much we need this kindergarten, with Tom's very busy schedule, and my incredibly inflexible schedule (which will only get worse with internship year, when I will work 80-100 hours a week), we need to have a place to keep Grace close to Tom for the entire day. We live in Pearland, and obviously neither of us are near home all day long. All this will get better after internship year, which is the year Grace would be finished with Kindergarten.

Thanks again,  
Ann Marshburn

**From:** Marshburn, Thomas H. (JSC-CB)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 02, 2006 1:34 PM  
**To:** Ellison, Amy L. (JSC-XA)  
**Cc:** marshburn@sbcglobal.net  
**Subject:** JSC kindergarten

Dear Amy,

My wife and I wholeheartedly support continuation of the kindergarten program. We, like many of the parents with children at JSC Daycare, appreciate the excellent environment and education at SFEI, and appreciate the expanded hours (0700-1730) that allows both parents to continue their work. It seems that stopping the kindergarten program would eventually affect most of the parents with children at SFEI. Stopping the kindergarten program to expand the infant program would simply displace the problem, as the parents of new infant students would probably have the same needs as their children also approach kindergarten age.

If cost is an issue, I would also consider pricing adjustments as required to keep the kindergarten open.

Thanks very much,

Tom and Ann Marshburn (parents of Grace, Room 6)

**From:** camartin@mdanderson.org [mailto:camartin@mdanderson.org]

**Sent:** Wednesday, June 14, 2006 12:11 PM

**To:** Rodriggs, Liana (JSC-ZV)

**Subject:** Letter re: Kindergarten for SFEI Board

Dear Liana:

Please pass this on to the SFEI Board as I am unable to attend the board meeting this week.

I am writing to praise the SFEI Kindergarten program. The program this year has provided exceptional reading development as well as social development for the children. The children have developed strong verbal and written skills that will benefit them greatly as First Graders. In wanting the best educational opportunities for our children, I do not believe the public sector can meet this need and provide the educational experience along with the caring environment as SFEI has done. I would be displeased to see that opportunity removed for the children currently in the center. If there is information that suggests increasing other age groups in the center would benefit the long-term existence of SFEI, we should research this further; however, not at the expense of the children in Rooms 5,6,7 & 8's development. I urge you to keep Kindergarten at SFEI. I believe it allows our children the opportunity to continue their growth and facilitate their education in reading, writing, math, science, Spanish and sign language that can not be duplicated in the private sector. I do hope you will provide a summary of the discussion at this meeting to all members electronically to assist them in their vote.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cathy A. Martin

(Mom of Casey, Riley, and Kelsey)

To: SFEI Board of Directors  
From: Jennifer Mason & Sean Power  
Subj: Kindergarten Program  
Date: August 16, 2006

We want to state for the record our family's position on the Kindergarten program at SFEI. In a nutshell, we plan to keep both of our sons, Makai and Keoni Power, in SFEI as long as possible because of the high quality of the education and social programs, the excellence of the teaching staff, and the close proximity to our work. After such a long (and sometimes agonizing) wait to get our oldest son in to SFEI (2 ½ yrs), we are greatly saddened by the prospect of him leaving next year when he turns 5.

When we entered SFEI, we had certain expectations. One was that both of our boys would attend Kindergarten there because of the excellent educational base it provides. While it's not technically a breach of contract, cancelling Kindergarten at this point does feel like a violation of an unwritten condition of our membership, and with very little notice.

If the primary driver is the low enrollment this year, SFEI should not base such a substantial decision on a trend of a single year (2006-2007). Since we have been involved, SFEI has NOT had significant problems filling spaces. In fact, the Board voted to EXPAND the number of Kindergarten slots just within the past 2 years. Why the rush now to do away with Kindergarten? Making this change, without thorough assessment of the impact to our students, is foolish.

SFEI has not, until recently, done a widespread effort to publicize older room openings, including Kindergarten. Specifically, there needs to be more extensive – and consistent – announcement of older room openings to off site contractors before we give up on Kindergarten. JSC Today does not reach all off site contractors – in fact, it excludes some of the major companies in this area, such as Boeing and USA. When we sent the kindergarten info to our contacts at Boeing, one typical response was “To be honest with you I did not even consider the JSC facility when I moved Rylie this week just because *the rumor is that it is always at capacity and the waiting list is extremely long*. She would have been a pre K 4.” (emphasis added) Let's address this perception in the community before we give up on Kindergarten.

If the primary driver is the long wait list, again, why the rush? SFEI has had a substantial wait list for years. The proposed change will allow some 12 additional families to enter their children. That is not a significant decrease in a wait list of over 100 families! It might make 12 families feel better, but overall, it hurts 8 families currently committed to Kindergarten, numerous other families who want to attend Kindergarten after 2007, and we believe it does not really address our membership issue of a long wait list.

We also believe, based on financial data used during the budget review process in previous years, that there will be an adverse affect on the SFEI budget based on the decrease in older rooms. So far, the Board has not presented adequate information on this. We would like to more fully understand the budget impact before a decision is reached.

We would like our boys to be in the same school – and at SFEI - as long as possible. We would like them to have the best foundation for their education – and we believe SFEI provides this. Please do not make a hasty decision to cancel Kindergarten. The reality is that you don't know how it will affect the membership yet. If you lose Kindergarten, then you might lose more than that. For example, with no Kindergarten at SFEI, our family would probably look at options for both of our boys to go to private school and preschool together in the fall of 2007, rather than splitting them up when Makai has to leave. That's not something that we thought of before this proposal, and not something that we really want to do.

We believe the SFEI Board, staff and parents efforts would be better spent focusing on options to expand the facility and TRULY address the wait list and migration issues that we face. Let's get grants and a loan and build what we really need to address our memberships' needs.

Thank you for opening this discussion up to the membership and weighing all sides. We just hope that the voices of our current students – represented by their parents – are heard.

Jennifer Mason and Sean Power

**From:** Raab, Dan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 20, 2006 3:57 PM  
**To:** 'Gensler, Janejit T. (JSC-OM5)[BAH]'  
**Subject:** RE: Kindergarten plans  
**Importance:** High

Jane,

Elizabeth is too young for Kindergarten now, she is in pre-K, but we DO plan on enrolling her in Kindergarten next year.

We just began daycare at JSC about a month ago, but it is clearly evident that the programs here are exceptional in quality and quantity. Elizabeth is challenged and much more interactive as a result of the change from our old daycare. We would see losing Kindergarten at JSC as a HUGE loss. Having Elizabeth on-site is, of course, very convenient.

PLEASE DO NOT ELIMINATE KINDERGARTEN...

Thanks,

Dan

Daniel H. Raab, Ph.D.  
Baseline Operations Readiness Manager  
Easi Bioastronautics Contract Program Manager  
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SFE&I has a high quality Kindergarten program that I fully believe will enrich my daughters life and she will be enrolled to attend. Both My daughter and many other children have waited a long time to get off the list and into the school and have set our long term plans to include SFE&I kindergarten. Cancelling the program will not provide us with enough time to replan and will deny my child the opportunity to participate in a high quality program. Many parents and single moms can not afford the private programs because they are so expensive. There is not another program within the Clear lake area that provides the high quality, diversified learning the diversified enrichment socially, morally, community, activities, resources, and diversification environments the child needs to grow as a whole, with all of the attributes, that SFE&I currently offers us for the price and resources that SFE&I has. I think that the SFE&I program that is in place has the dependability and reliability and quality program with the best teacher student ratios. Parents who spend a long time paying dues to continue to have their child on the wait list should have the opportunity to use the program once they finally make it off their list. I know we are late additions this school year because we just came off the wait list but Having to add another yet another transition to another school is definitely not in the best interest of my child especially if it is to a lower program. When I have additional children in the future, I want them to be able to attend SFE&I from infant through and including Kindergarten.

If children are leaving because of an older sibling it is a temporary fluctuation and not a permanent situation for which current member like myself should not be penalized. The main reason the program is not receiving high attendance is because of the late notification of openings.

- **Advertised entirely too late - past the date when parents who have been on the waiting list for years have already paid deposits and or tuition at another daycare/school. Several schools have you pay tuition for the upcoming year in FULL as early as May – some as early as March – with little or no option of refund**
- **Notice does not reach all potential customers, especially the contractors.**
- **If there is a shortage in the infant area – that should be addressed separately and not at the expense of the older children and should not deny them the opportunity that they need.**
- **The problem is that when they built the childcare center – they built it Too small (occupancy wise). They should have doubled or tripled the size of the Center. It would still be full with a long waiting list but, there would be a lot less frustrated parents at JSC. For 10+ years most parents have felt it was hopeless to even get on the list because they would never receive an opening due to the limited number of slots available. Instead of killing the kindergarten program to open a few slots for infants - the TRUE problem should be addressed. You need to increase the center/facility to**

accommodate 70% of the waiting list. Then those infants can also grow up thru the older classes as well. I believe that if you increase the opportunities

- With today's diversified family, Grandparents whose grandchildren are being raised by a single parent should be allowed to enroll that child because other alternatives are too expensive for single parents. The current nurturing staff and low teacher student ratios also provide a benefit most needed by children of single parents. Good quality learning time and opportunities one on one with the teachers and other staff members that will be essential in their development both as a child and scholastically. The benefit and availability of a safe, positive learning environment should never be underestimated.
- I've heard about it parent night - buried in all info
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- If they

Solutions:

Notice of Kindergarten openings/ opportunities:

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